

Why I Became

A Catholic.

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surprised and would repudiate the shibboleth. He teaches a Protestantism quite different from the Protestantism of our day. He understood the value of tradition, and says: "It is upon the authority of universal tradition that we would have them believe Scripture," having subscribed to St. Augustine's declaration, "We would not believe the Gospel unless the authority of the Catholic Church doth move us." Having gone thus far, Chillingworth declares the assertion, "Scriptures alone to judge all controversy in faith" is "a plain falsehood," affirming that "universal tradition is the rule to judge all controversies by." Again he says: "Neither doth being written make the Word of God the more fallible, nor being unwritten make it less infallible," while "the true Church shall always both maintain and teach all necessary truths," and "we grant and must grant, for it is the essence of the Church to be so." Here we have an essential principle. The old Protestant war cry is repudiated by its alleged author, while many critics are discovering that the position of Hooker is untenable where he teaches that tradition is a fundamental error of Rome. The fact is also pointed out that, finding their Scripture authority gone, a class of Protestants are inventing a doctrine of tradition akin to that of Rome. It is clear, as charged, that the failure of Protestant religionists to maintain the integrity of the Bible is dissolving the entire intellectual basis of the Reformation. The cry now is: "The Bible only when we agree with it." The old form falls on the ear. The Bible has fallen down from its high place, where it had been enthroned superior to the Church of Christ, which formed the canon of Scripture and clothed it with authority. This is one inevitable result of venturing the book at the expense of the Church, for which is greater, the Temple or the Buller? On the principle of private judgment the book alone could not stand. It must be ever so. An infallible book calls for an infallible interpreter. The human cannot comprehend the divine. The Catholic Church alone can interpret and protect the book. Under her care it can never lose its authority in the eyes of her children. Protestantism is an anachronism, a carnation of prejudices and stands dazed before the twentieth century with its gates ajar.

A WORD ON INFALLIBILITY.

It is time for candid non-Catholics to address themselves to the subject of infallibility, and learn that the notion that it interferes with individual liberty is as true as that the mariner's compass renders the sailor an abject slave. Without instruments and guidance the sailor would be as free as the ancient Sidenian in his ivory galley with purple sails, without even an astrakhan to take the height of the polar star, dumb-reckoning and guessing his way, gaining with strained, uncertain eye over pathless sea and perilous shore. The freedom that the devout Catholic loses is the freedom to lose his way in storm and night and fog. Mr. Mallock, an independent thinker and onlooker, evidently not caring much, if anything, for either side, declares in the article already referred to that the form of the Christian religion that serves the present intellectual crisis must be "the Christian religion embodied in the Church of Rome, and not in any form of Protestantism." In the judgment of the most disinterested observers the Roman Church must in the future be the Church of the intellectual classes, even as it was for many centuries before the revolt of Henry VIII. against the Pope. Rome, as "the Champion of Revelation," will offer to the human intellect the "great Apologia." A class of mole-eyed men may fail to see what is taking place, but it is now nevertheless evident that "all things are being re-ordered," and that once thought would be fatal to her (Rome) are now in a way which constitutes one of the great surprises of history, so grouping themselves as to afford her a new foundation. On the other hand, with Protestants, it is coming to this, that every source of authority and pledge of permanence is disappearing, while the supernatural events of the Old Testament are less history than the siege of Troy, glimpses of truth may be found, but not the real thing. Protestantism ends the critic himself cannot tell. His own end, nevertheless, is certain, and it remains, therefore, for the Catholic Church, speaking with authority, to reassure a doubting world by declaring that all the books of the Old and New Testament, in all their parts, are inspired and together form the infallible Word of God.

HOLDS THE KEY TO THE MENTAL, MORAL AND SPIRITUAL PROBLEMS OF THE AGE.

The Catholic church is the natural and authorized guardian of Holy Scripture. She offers the solution of the Bible question. Already there is a vague idea abroad, even in Reformation circles, that this is so, and are looking there must come a full conviction that it is Rome to whom the world must look for the settlement, not only of the Bible issue, but of all the questions that stand related to Christianity. Protestantism indeed talks of progress, but it does not comprehend the intellectual issues in this crisis and is not abreast the age.

Still, a few non-Catholics are becoming more candid in their estimate of the Catholic church, both as a moral power and as a necessity of our national life, recognizing that if it were taken away society would lose a needed cement and that the republic itself would be insecure. There is less heat today in the discussion of Catholic claims than twenty-five years ago, and we hear fewer of those unfounded charges from men's lips that they do not care to subscribe with their hands. The Catholic church is specially adapted to the wants of the American people. In that with needed safeguards it is eminently favorable to real freedom of thought. Its claims are nobly supported by history and philosophy. A man argues the case against himself when he attempts to ignore the character and standing of Catholicity. The Catholic church holds the key to the mental, moral and spiritual problems of the age. When rightly understood by the American people, the Catholic church will be found capable of meeting all its varied requirements. Whoever desires a church must inevitably find it in the Catholic church. If the Catholics are wrong in their belief, then there is no Catholic church anywhere. Singularly the same is true if Protestants are right in their belief, since they deny that the Roman is the Catholic church, and do not themselves pretend to be the Catholic church. In denying the Catholicity of Rome they sign their own death warrant; even as the man proves his own poverty when he proclaims the universe insolvent. On the Protestant theory there is no visible church, the only body being a mythical body in the air. On this theory Christianity has failed. The empire that triumphed over the Roman empire has perished. This is simply pessimism run mad. Reformation religionism, therefore, offers no moral or intellectual outlook for coming generations, and leaves the world forced at last to choose between Rationalism and the Catholic church. I believe in the Holy Catholic church and the Life Everlasting.

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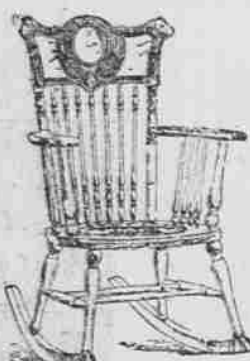
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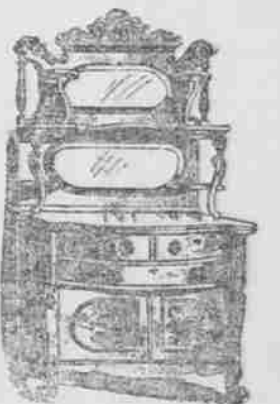
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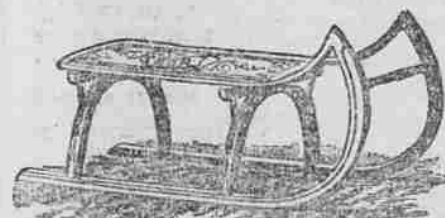
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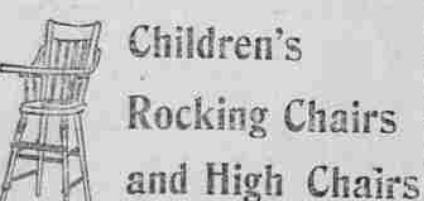
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Parlor Tables, solid oak or mahogany, piano polished, brass claw feet, brass shelf supporters, heavy top—

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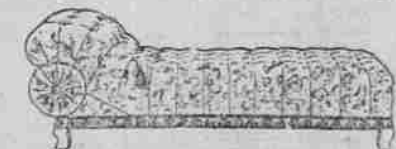
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